



Pentagon Report on Vulnerable Bases Incomplete Climate Change Resilience Requires Stronger Response

January 18, 2019—Today, the Department of Defense released a [Congressionally-mandated report on the effects of a changing climate on America's military bases](#). The Environmental and Energy Study Institute welcomes the report but finds it **incomplete**, as it fails to list the most vulnerable bases, per Congress's directive. More importantly, the **report doesn't list and price out actionable measures that could be taken to better prepare America's armed forces for the impacts of climate change.**

"The Department of Defense has long recognized climate change as a major threat to U.S. national security," says EESI Executive Director Carol Werner. "It has taken steps to make its bases and activities more resilient. But to truly ensure we can continue to defend our nation and protect our allies, **more resources are needed. Regrettably, the Department has failed to list which bases are most vulnerable, and what it would cost to strengthen them.** Not only is that a lost opportunity, it also bypasses the clear directions of the *National Defense Authorization Act*, which had broad bipartisan support."

The report begins by stating that "**the effects of a changing climate are a national security issue with potential impacts to Department of Defense missions, operational plans, and installations.**" It echoes November's National Climate Assessment, which stated that "the evidence of human-caused climate change is overwhelming and continues to strengthen, that the impacts of climate change are intensifying across the country, and that climate-related threats to Americans' physical, social, and economic well-being are rising."

The 22-page Pentagon report focuses on 79 key military installations and looks at how vulnerable they are to flooding, drought, desertification, wildfires, and thawing permafrost—which are all exacerbated by climate change. Rising sea levels make flooding more likely in coastal bases, for example, while wildfires threaten inland bases. According to the report, **about two-thirds of these 79 installations are (or will be) vulnerable to flooding, and about half are vulnerable to wildfires.** However, the report doesn't look at hurricanes or other extreme wind events, even though Hurricanes Michael and Florence caused \$5 billion and \$3.6 billion in damages, respectively, to Tyndall Air Force Base and Camp Lejeune last year. These two bases were not even evaluated by the report.

In a statement, **House Armed Services Committee Chairman Adam Smith** (D-WA) and **Senior Committee Member Jim Langevin** (D-RI) were both [very critical of the report](#). According to Chairman Smith, the report "fails to even minimally discuss a mitigation plan to address the vulnerabilities. The Department of Defense presented no specifics on what is required to ensure operational viability and mission resiliency, and failed to estimate the future costs associated with ensuring these installations remain viable. That information was required by law." Rep. Langevin agreed, saying, "I expect the Department to reissue a report that meets its statutory mandate and rigorously confronts the realities of our warming planet."

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